GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS

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General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

Contents for Week of April 27, 1931. Vol. X. No. 10

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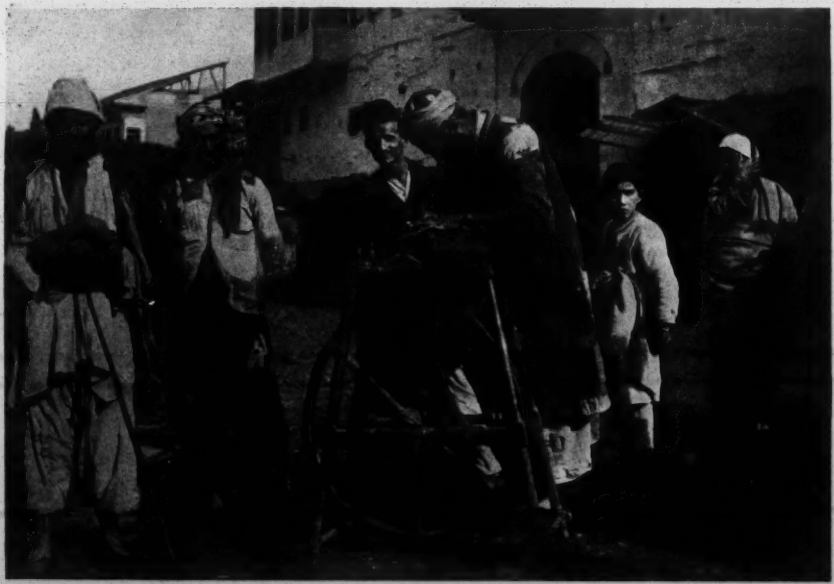

© *Melville Chater*

KURDS PATRONIZE THE FAMILIAR KNIFE SHARPENER

Every native of Kurdistan wears a belt knife and keeps it sharp, more for protection than decoration. Almost since the beginning of history the nomadic Kurd tribesmen have been warlike and troublesome. In the spring each year, they sally forth from their mountain strongholds and are a source of trouble for Turk and Persian alike (See Bulletin No. 3).

HOW TEACHERS MAY OBTAIN THE BULLETINS

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Airplane and Ship To Be Utilized in Mapping Labrador

USING the map-makers' most modern and helpful instrument, the aerial camera, Commander Donald B. MacMillan plans to chart the hidden reefs and treacherous coast of Labrador (see, also, Bulletin No. 4). He hopes to fly in a dawn-to-dusk flight from Wiscasset, Maine, to Nain, Labrador, his base, thus saving eight days over the "old-fashioned" water route. At Nain, he will meet his ship, the *Bowdoin*, veteran of eight Arctic voyages, which this time will play mother-ship to his airplane and house the scientists, pilots and surveyors.

Commander MacMillan will have the coöperation of Sir Wilfred Grenfell, who has long hoped for a careful survey of this little-known part of the world. Sir Wilfred's social work has helped alter the human geography of Labrador, creating new industries for the natives, and encouraging explorations which have revealed scenic beauties and potential water-power sites.

Highest Mountains on Atlantic Seaboard

Labrador is a strange land of many contrasts. Because of its barren, forbidding shores sailors call it the "Land of Naked Rocks," yet inland Labrador is green with vegetation. Virgin spruce, a potential source of pulpwood, all kinds of berry bushes, scrub trees, moss and many northern varieties of wild flowers cover the interior, while familiar garden vegetables are grown in sheltered mission gardens.

In summer, under bright blue skies, giant "sea horses" leap and crash against its uncharted reefs, the graveyard of many a fair ship, while in the nine months of winter, creaking, groaning ice floes smash and grind against its outer defenses of rock. Parts of the coast are low-lying granite islands and headlands, but, in other places, gray mountains, the highest on the North Atlantic seaboard, rise sharply from the ocean's depths to 4,000 feet.

While existence in Labrador is a life-long battle, its inhabitants enjoy certain enviable advantages. For instance, fat salmon and trout swim into nets tied to private wharves, virtually to one's front door. Sleepy spruce grouse sit on boughs of fir trees and allow noiseless natives to slip up from behind and drop nooses over their heads, thereby saving time, trouble and ammunition. Partridges and hares are plentiful. Natives sneak up on the former and with a snap of their dog whips flick off the birds' heads. Individuals have been known to bag 500 in one hunt by this economical method.

Ducks Fly Regular Routes

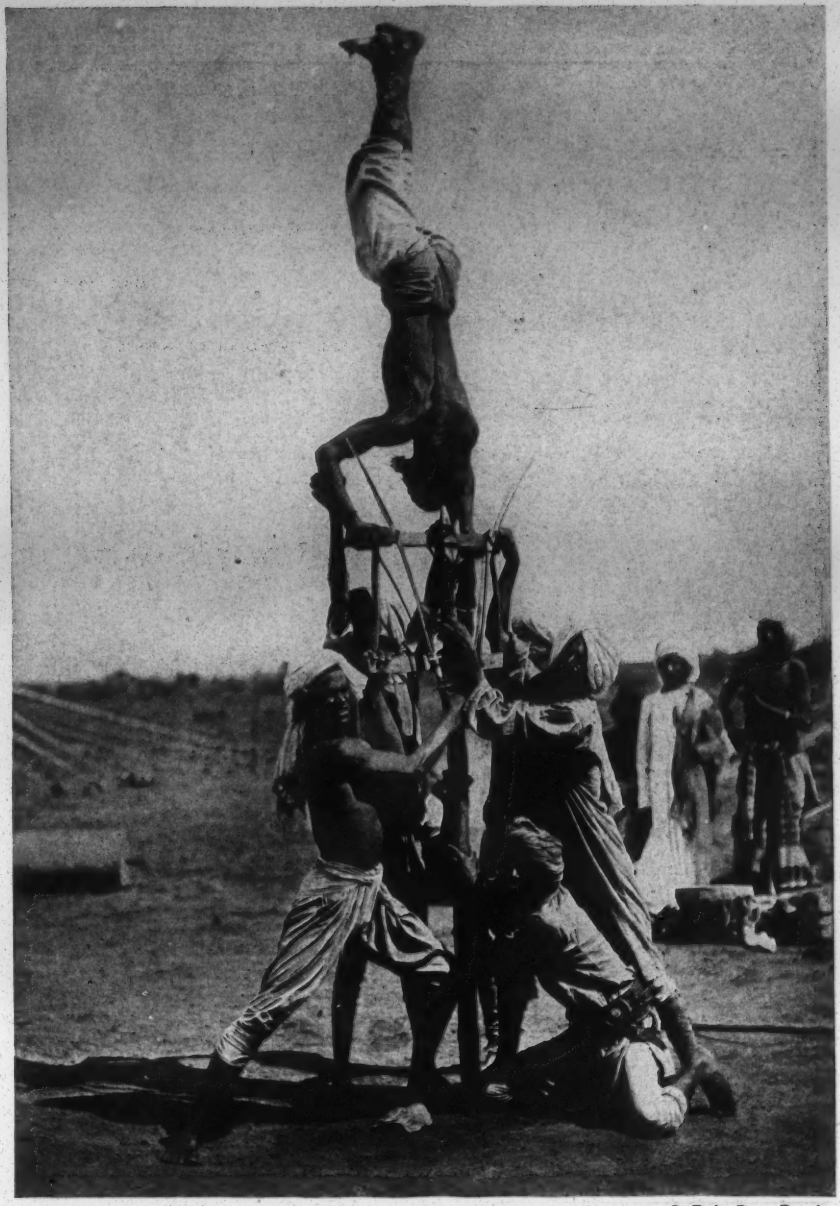
Migrating ducks fly regular routes, following the indentations of the coast, not daring to strike off in foggy weather across wide bays by dead reckoning. Hunters, knowing this, plant themselves with their dogs in primitive blinds and drop the ducks as they fly past close inshore, using all kinds of ancient firearms. Bears make good eating and taste like venison. Deer are numerous and their worst enemy is not the wolf, as one might suppose, but a species of fly whose maggot bores into their beautiful bodies. Skins which make soft, warm clothing and moccasins show 100 to 1,000 tiny holes made by this insect. Wild berries, such as the cranberry, remain on the bushes all winter and are often picked after the spring thaws. It is said that snow sweetens the red fruit.

During the summer months, the deep, fiord-like harbors are dotted with Newfoundland fishing vessels over for the cod season. So poor are some of these fisherfolk that whole families, including mother and daughter-in-law, often "man" the boats. The recent perfecting of a new method for quick freezing may eventually help the Labrador industry by allowing the shipment to the United States of fresh fish from this far-off country. Hitherto, cod and salmon have been salted and dried and the smelt-like capelan caught in great numbers were used to make fertilizer.

Seals Caught in Nets

While sealing is not so important an industry to Labrador as it is to Newfoundland, many seals are taken off its coast. In the waters near certain headlands the seals are caught and drowned in ordinary nets, for they swim along close to the rocky shore much as migrating birds do in the air. Many Labradorians in the early spring hunt seals from large ships which follow the whelping herds out to the ice pack. To save the ships many weeks of useless search, airplanes are often employed for spotting the herd on the ice.

Although no part of Labrador is north of the latitude of Scotland, dog teams and sledges are the sole modes of transportation for three-quarters of the year, excluding, of course, one's



© *Raja Deen Dayal*

TRY THIS—STAND ON YOUR HEAD ON THE POINT OF A SPEAR

In a moment this performer will grasp the ends of the two swords with his hands and balance with his head on the third. From India come many of the hair-raising stunts so familiar in the American circus (See Bulletin No. 2).

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New Delhi, World's Newest Capital City

NEW DELHI, recently dedicated new capital, and therefore new headline for many dispatches from India, is to the British Indian Empire what Washington, D. C., is to the United States.

The general plan of this magnificent city as laid out by Sir Edwin Lutyens resembles L'Enfant's plan for the American capital. However, New Delhi is not the first capital to be located on the banks of the sprawling Jumna River.

Site of Seven Cities

Within an area of 45 square miles around New Delhi, seven huge cities have been raised by powerful emperors and princes. Only crumbling temples and leveled walls scattered about the flat countryside attest the bygone glory of these dead cities. The most recent, Old Delhi, still stands, an enduring monument to the power and wealth of the Mogul emperors who ruled India for three centuries.

While New Delhi may be patterned after Washington, even to having a separate government, in many other respects it is different. There is a central mall called King's Way, with imposing government buildings of mixed classical and Indian architecture fronting it. Instead of the legislative hall being the focal point, as is our Capitol, the massive British Viceroy's palace, or Government House, set on a low Acropolis-like hill, is the hub. Broad avenues and boulevards radiate from Government Court in front of it like spokes, each pointing to an Indian historical landmark. Palaces of Indian princes and the homes of officials and members of the assembly line these arteries. Employees and workers have comfortable bungalows and hotels on the outlying streets.

Set off a little to itself, almost as if it had been thought of at the last minute, is the great Council House, a huge structure resembling from the outside a round and magnified Lincoln Memorial. It encircles 13 acres, about four times the ground area of the United States Capitol. Its most distinctive feature, aside from its cart-wheel shape, is the majestic row of tall white columns lining its half-mile periphery.

India Has Three Legislative Branches

Inside the Council House are large chambers, tastefully decorated, where meet the three legislative branches of the Government of India, the Council of State (upper house), the Legislative Assembly (lower house) and the Chamber of Princes. The magnificent library in the center of the building is large enough to hold all three bodies meeting together. Of especial interest to the occidental mind are the beautifully carved stone screens from behind which purdah ladies may watch the princes when in session.

Many visitors to New Delhi wonder why there are not more shade trees. The reason is clear. Because of the dryness of the climate, pipe lines must be led to each tree to keep it alive.

Nevertheless, the Imperial City is not a desert all the year round. During two months, January and February, when the weather is clear and cool, it is literally a garden capital. Lawns, shrubs and flowers, such as sweet peas, roses, lupines, hollyhocks, red poinsettias and purple bougainvillea bloom in profusion and make the British feel at home, although squatting Punjab women, in gayly-colored clothes, are the gardeners. March spells the doom of this Edenlike atmosphere with the advent of the first dust storm. These hot blistering winds from the plains wither up everything.

own snowshoes. During the summer months the sea becomes the arterial highway and power dories the motor vehicles of more temperate regions. Gasoline may well be considered as the native's chief item of expense, as for his southern brother. Dog team races on the ice of frozen harbors take the place of horse racing. The driver of the winning team in this northern Futurity becomes the hero of the winter to his neighbors. When dogs roam at will during their summer vacation, Battle Harbor is the concert platform for the loudest "husky" dog chorus in the world!

Natives Take Up New Industries

Sir Wilfred is aided in his welfare work among the Scotch-Irish and English colonists and fisherfolk by American college men and women who, guided by unselfish motives, give their services during the summer holidays. These workers, with the help of trained teachers, have taught the people new methods for increasing their income and thereby have helped them alleviate some of the hardships of living in this Arctic country. No finer hooked rugs are made anywhere than in Labrador. Discarded silk stockings with runs are at a premium here for use as rags in the rugs. Toy making, weaving and ivory carving with walrus and narwhal tusks as the medium are some of the most profitable trades.

Battle Harbor came into news prominence in 1925 when Sir Wilfred accompanied the National Geographic Society-MacMillan Expedition, which was headed for Etah, Greenland—an expedition whereon Admiral Byrd commanded the Navy personnel and made his first flying experiments in high latitudes.

Previously, Battle Harbor had had its first baptism as a world news source in September, 1909, when Peary, returning from his discovery of the North Pole, met American correspondents who sent the first great news story by wireless.

See also: "MacMillan Arctic Expedition Returns," *National Geographic Magazine*, November, 1925; "The *Bowdoin* in North Greenland," June, 1925; and "A Land of Eternal Warring," August, 1910.

Bulletin No. 1, April 27, 1931.

© *National Geographic Society*

THE *BOWDOIN*, VETERAN OF EIGHT ARCTIC VOYAGES, STRIKES A HIDDEN ROCK OFF HOPEDALE, LABRADOR

To forestall such accidents, which often prove fatal to larger ships than this sturdy little craft, Commander MacMillan hopes to survey accurately the coast of Labrador this summer. In the foreground are parts of the airplanes used by Rear Admiral Byrd on his first Arctic venture in 1925, when he commanded the Navy unit of the National Geographic Society-MacMillan Expedition to North Greenland.

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The Kurds, Historic Trouble Makers, Revolt Again

THE KURDS are revolting again, this time on the Turko-Persian border, but perhaps the word "again" should be changed to "yet."

Nearly 3,000 years ago, outlying Assyrian settlements were harassed by marauding bands of Kurds, and in the fifth century B.C., the tribesmen attempted to annihilate Xenophon and his 10,000 retreating Greeks by rolling stones from high cliffs along the line of march. In the meantime, the Armenians who entered Kurd territory were either massacred or driven from the country.

Turkish Changes in Moslem Customs Offend Tribesmen

In spite of exciting events in the fighting history of the Kurds, the tribesmen were almost unknown outside the Near East before the World War. When a delegation of Kurds appeared at the Peace Conference in 1919, newspaper men did not know who the sunburnt tribesmen might be. When their identity was revealed the Kurds went on the front pages and frequently have been there since.

Six years ago the tribesmen revolted in an attempt to set up their own government, but Mustapha Kemal's forces subdued them. The scrapping of the Caliphate at Constantinople aroused them and nearly every change in old Moslem customs has irritated them. Revolt after revolt has been quelled but as soon as the Kurd replenishes his forces and supplies, he is ready to attack again.

Tribesmen Maintain Old Racial Customs

Most of the 2,000,000 Kurds in the Near East inhabit the eastern areas of Turkey, but tribes also are scattered over the northern part of Iraq and western Persia. Neither the Turks nor any other people have influenced the tribesmen. Now and then a few other modern devices have crept into the Kurds' mountain villages, but the close tribal life maintains the old racial customs.

The Kurd farmers of the Iraq plains are more prosperous than the tribesmen of the hill country. Travelers climb the trails for miles without seeing a village. When one does appear, it is usually situated in a well protected spot. Houses are placed without regard to building line and a bird's-eye view of a village reveals a jumble of mud and stone structures.

The peasant's house is a one-room structure which might be mistaken for a stable. The tribesman reserves one side of his abode for his animals while his family occupies the other side. Kurds sit on the floor when they rest or eat, therefore they do not need tables or chairs.

Curdled Milk Is a Favorite Dish

The tribal chief or headman fares better. He has a house for his family and a guest house where he lives and entertains his guests. He is offended if a traveler does not "drop in." Once the traveler has stopped, he must remain for dinner. The food is placed on the floor in the center of the diners. Should a guest stretch his legs toward another person, convey food to his mouth with his left hand, or fondle the dog, his host is offended. No knives and forks are to be found in the Kurd silver closet but if a guest has difficulty in feeding himself with his hands, a spoon will be handed to him. Few meals are served that do not include *mast* (curdled milk), the favorite dish of the Kurd. A little water mixed with the mast makes *mastao*, the Kurd "national" drink. The tribesmen like vegetables but seldom serve meat.

Simla, the Summer Capital

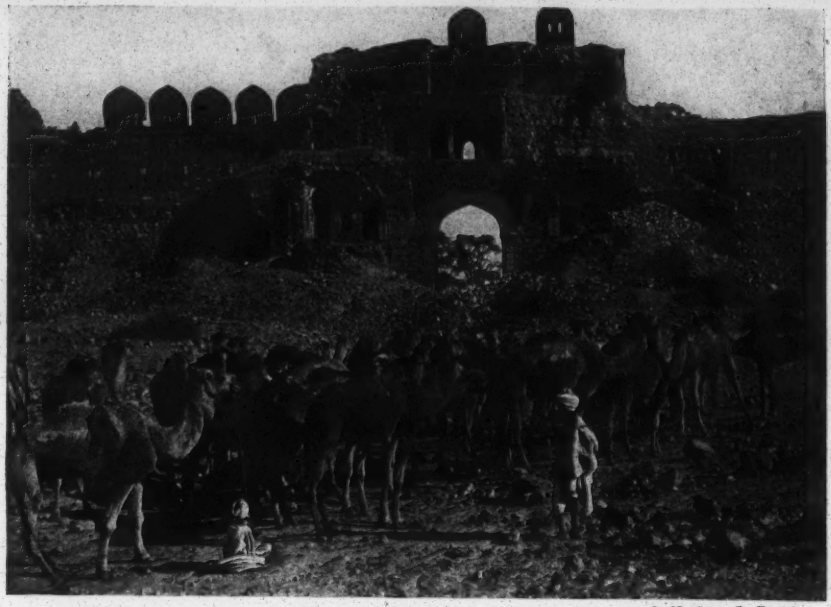
The "season" at this inland capital is short and follows closely the climatic changes. The end of October, when the weather begins to become more livable, marks the annual inflow of government officials, princes, and members of the assembly from Simla, the summer capital, high in the Punjab hills. From then until March, life at New Delhi is not unlike that in any other large capital such as London or Washington, D. C. Social affairs, garden parties, state balls, polo matches, charity entertainments and, of course, politics occupy the time of its migratory inhabitants. For about seven hot months, in summer, New Delhi is practically a deserted city, excepting for caretakers.

Parliament Street, a main avenue, leads directly to the great mosque Jama-Masjid, in the center of Old Delhi, some 5 miles distant. There, Friday mornings, thousands of turbaned Mohammedans gather for prayer. Lined up in straight rows, they look like soldiers performing Swedish exercises, as they kneel and bow in unison.

The remains of Shah Jahan's intricate palace with the famous peacock throne room, the ornamented city gates and the shops on the "street of silver" long have attracted colorful tourists from the length and breadth of India to old Delhi. Foreign visitors, wearing pith helmets in the cooler months, also visit the scenes of the gallant assault of Britain's little army against the Delhi ramparts during the Mutiny of 1857.

See "Seeing the World from the Air," *National Geographic Magazine*, March, 1928; "Tiger Hunting in India," November, 1924; and "Through the Heart of Hindustan," November, 1921.

Bulletin No. 2, April 27, 1931.



© *Herbert G. Ponting*

"SHIPS OF THE DESERT" PAUSE BENEATH THE CRUMBLING WALLS OF OLD DELHI

The new capital of the British Indian Empire is the eighth city to be built by India's successive conquerors on the banks of the Jumna River. New Delhi's main axis, King's Way, and other important avenues lead to historic Indian landmarks and temples scattered over the near-by countryside.

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How Aerial Photographs Aid the Geographer

AERIAL photography has helped the geographer portray and study many facts of scientific interest.

For example, one aerial photograph, taken on an expedition of the National Geographic Society, pictures, for the first time, the curvature of the earth's surface, and another shows a giant waterspout.

These aerial pictures and 1,500 others were taken by Capt. A. W. Stevens, noted aerial photographer, on The Society's expedition which surveyed the air routes from Washington, D. C. to Buenos Aires. Captain Stevens was accompanied by Jacob Gayer, who took ground photographs, and Frederick Simpich, who made observations along the 12,000-mile route, which included many side trips to little-visited areas of the interior, especially around the mouths of the Orinoco and Amazon Rivers and the jungles of Brazil.

"Life History" of Waterspout

The waterspout, a mighty, wriggling, serpentine column of water, was sighted near Havana, where the airplane circled it and photographs were taken from its start to its dissipation—giving the complete "life history" of the dread phenomenon.

One clear and frosty morning in September, Argentina's midwinter, while flying toward Villa Mercedes, the expedition's airplane climbed to an altitude of 21,000 feet. Poking his heavy camera over the side, Captain Stevens snapped a long-distance portrait of Mt. Aconcagua, 320 miles away, although the mountain was invisible to the naked eye. Upon developing this film the white mountain peak, as far away as Albany is from Washington, D. C., showed plainly, supported by the massive Andean range.

Two Miles Higher Than Everest!

Two years ago, from an especially built Army airplane with Capt. St. Clair Streett as pilot, Captain Stevens took another world's record photograph—Rushville, Indiana, from 39,150 feet—an altitude almost 2 miles higher than Mt. Everest!

Air photographs represent a new instrument of science, in addition to their value to aviators and their pictorial beauty. Mapmakers utilize aerial pictures in preparing maps quickly and cheaply. Geologists discover in them new features and peculiar formations on the earth's surface which are not ordinarily visible from the ground. Archeologists use them to record new theories and facts about the habitats of ancient man.

Whenever earth is dug or turned over, the surface soil is mixed with that beneath. If the latter is chalk, as in parts of England and Flanders, this stirred up soil never becomes merged again in color. Therefore, where man has dug a hole or ditch, this fact is noticeable by distinct blemishes on the aerial landscape. Roman encampments and roads, burial mounds, and zigzagging trenches of the World War are clearly discernible.

Map Making Most Practical Use

Aerial camera men speak as glibly of "verticals" and "obliques" as studio photographers refer to "bust portraits" and "full lengths." When the camera is pointed straight down, the resulting picture is a vertical and when it is held at an angle to the earth an oblique. The latter are the types usually seen as illustrations in newspapers and magazines. The verticals have a more practical use, however, as it is from them that aerial "mosaic" maps are made. These "mosaics" are

Under Moslem law, the Kurd may take four wives. Wives are bought, so the peasant usually has only one. The chiefs take the full quota. Wives are priced according to their rank. The tribesman can get a wife in exchange for a pony or goat, or one may cost the equivalent of $2,500. The wedding entails a season of merrymaking in which the whole tribe joins.

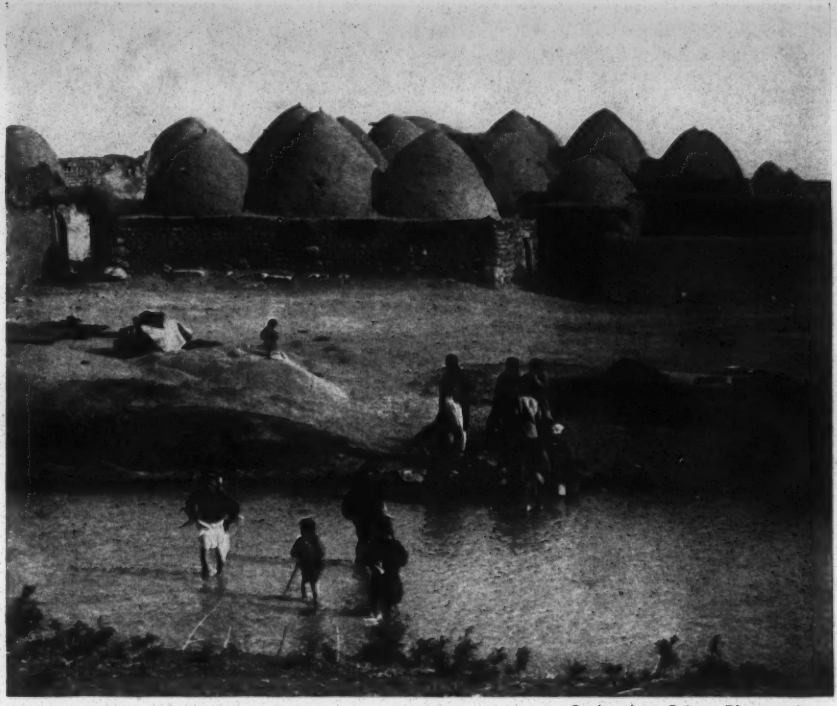
Take Their Roofs on "Moving Day"

To the foreigner, the Kurds seem to know little else than the "art" of highway robbery. Many of the mountain tribesmen are adept thieves, but in the hills as well as the plains, many Kurds earn honest livings by farming and cattle raising. Kurds are pastoral people, seldom moving from their villages except to migrate to higher altitudes during the summer for new pasturage. Now and then a whole tribe will move from a village. The tribesman takes his roof, the only valuable part of his hut.

Life is hard in the mountains but the family has time to play. In the summer camp the young tribesmen spend their leisure moments playing touch-last on horseback. Children play a sort of hockey, with crooked sticks and wood balls. Now and then the traveler will see a deck of cards in a tent but they are usually used by the children. Gambling is not indulged in by the tribesmen, who, after a hard day's work, enjoy sitting outside their tents.

See also: "New Light on Ancient Ur," *National Geographic Magazine*, January, 1930; "Marco Polo: The World's Greatest Overland Explorer," November, 1928; and "The Kizilbash Clans of Kurdistan," October, 1928.

Bulletin No. 3, April 27, 1931.



© *American Colony Photographers*

THE KURDISH HOME IS DOMED LIKE A BEEHIVE

The interiors of these peculiar mud houses in the Orontes plains, north of Hama, are often quite clean. While many of the Kurds of the mountain fastnesses of Eastern Turkey and Persia are war-like, the tribes scattered over the Syrian plains live peacefully by tilling the soil.

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Madeira: Land of Perpetual Summer Where Sleds Are "Taxis"

THE Madeira Islands, recent scene of political disturbances, ordinarily are marked by a quiet, peaceful atmosphere which attracts health seekers, while the perpetual balmy climate and picturesque scenery draw thousands of tourists from America and Europe. Even in the towns there is no clatter of steel-shod hoofs, rumble of cart wheels or rattling and backfiring of automobiles.

Every boat which enters the harbor at Funchal, capital and largest town on the island, is met by native boys who amuse passengers by diving for coins in shark-infested waters. But the thrill of a short visit to Madeira comes when the traveler mounts a Madeira "taxi" on runners. If time is short, two stalwart native boys can show the sights of the capital in a few hours, but the easy-going life of the inhabitants soon gets "under the skin" of the visitor, and the slow-moving, bullock-drawn sled, upholstered in red, green and yellow striped cloth, affords a better opportunity to get acquainted with the town.

Embroidery Work a Household Industry

Up and down hills the animal plods through narrow cobbled streets, solidly walled with spotlessly white houses. Now and then the front of a building is adorned with exhibits of Madeira embroidery work and through the door small girls are seen skillfully executing difficult patterns. Before some of these girls have reached their teens, their needlework has graced the tables and beds of some of the finest homes in six continents, for they begin embroidering as soon as they are old enough to handle a needle.

Shops Advertise Merchandise in English

The Madeira milkman, bearing a pole across his shoulders with a 5 gallon can at each end, stops long enough to watch a group of tourists bump over the cobbles. Dirty-faced boys, standing among tall bags of fuel brush, smile under small knitted caps with ear flaps turned up toward a fuzzy pompon. Women flower venders, with a portion of their merchandise bedecking their thick, unbobbed hair, accost every passerby. Meanwhile, flat-topped sleds, piled with furniture, brushwood, groceries, wine casks and other movables, come and go.

Madeira belongs to Portugal and Portuguese is the native language on the island, but British and American money is so attractive that signs in English are frequently seen on shop fronts. One reads "A CORDIAL INVITATION IS EXTENDED TO ALL MADEIRA VISITORS TO SHOP HERE." Another invites visitors to "WRITE YOUR CARDS HERE." Most prominent of all is a large sign extending over a portion of the street which reads, "PLEASE COME UP (meaning up one of Funchal's hillside streets) FOR YOUR REAL HANDMADE EMBROIDERIES."

Towns Occupy Narrow Ledges at the Foot of Mountain Cliffs

Most of the 179,000 inhabitants of Madeira live in towns occupying narrow ledges along the seashore. Behind some of them sheer cliffs rise more than a thousand feet. Funchal, with 25,000 inhabitants, occupies a ledge at the head of a broad bay, but the hills in the background, though steep, are also dotted with white houses set amid flower and vegetable gardens, fruit trees, and vineyards.

simply adjoining sections of photographs pieced together like patchwork quilts.

To take aerial photographs properly, the camera man must almost hang on by his toes. A swift dive of the airplane into an "air pocket" might toss him out. His camera is extremely heavy and to keep it from vibrating in the wind a firm stance is important.

Success with aerial pictures depends upon the ability of pilot and photographer to coöperate. The tail or wings have a habit of sticking themselves into the picture at just the wrong time. Captain Stevens has developed a buzzer system which he uses when operating from a big plane. Two buzzes means turn right, three—left, and four—keep straight.

Good aerial obliques must be taken from outside the cockpit, because intervening glass of a cabin window would detract from the clearness of the picture. Sometimes the temperature approaches the low records reported by Admiral Byrd at Little America. Therefore, when flying at high altitudes, special clothing and liquid oxygen must be provided for the crew and the camera is often electrically heated.

See also: "Flying the 'Hump' of the Andes," *National Geographic Magazine*, May, 1931; "Skypaths through Latin America," January, 1931; "Color Camera's First Aerial Success," September, 1930; and "The Non-Stop Flight across America," July, 1924.

Bulletin No. 4, April 27, 1931.

© *Photograph by Arthur Elliot*

A YAWNING CHASM SWALLOWS THE BROAD ZAMBEZI RIVER

An aerial photograph shows at a glance this strange feature of Victoria Falls, not so noticeable from the ground. The tumbling waters, with a roar like thunder, fall twice the distance of Niagara. Below the Falls, the river becomes narrow and runs swiftly through a deep canyon. While photographing the famous Falls, Sir Allan Cobham and his aid, Arthur Elliot, nearly lost their lives when their motor faltered in the thick mist over the brink.

Every tillable acre is cultivated in the interior valleys and ingenious farmers have terraced steep rocky hills to increase crop production.

The roads through the mountains are mere trails. In many places the hammock, borne by two bearers, is the only transport that can be used. Along the trails men and women carry hides filled with wine, sacks of potatoes, and wicker chairs to town. Frequently a man carries as many as ten wicker chairs clustered about his head.

Stone-walled, thatched-roofed huts dot the Madeiran countryside. Approaching one hut, the groan and squeak of the primitive, all wood, wine press is heard as it crushes luscious Madeira grapes. The barefoot occupants of another hut deftly weave wicker into chairs which might ultimately adorn American porches. It was in Madeira that the wicker chair industry began on a large scale.

See also: "The Columbus of the Pacific," *National Geographic Magazine*, January, 1927; and "Madeira, on the Way to Italy," December, 1907.

Bulletin No. 5, April 27, 1931.

© *Topical Press Agency*

SUBSEA "WATER POLO" IS PLAYED BY THESE MADEIRA BOYS

Ships entering Funchal's open roadstead are met by native boys in small boats. When passengers throw overboard shiny coins, these youngsters dive after them gracefully. Sometimes tactics not unlike water polo occur beneath the surface, but coins once placed in the mouth are considered "fair catch."